

Draft Firearm- related Injury

7/3/2006

Definition: All firearm-related deaths and hospitalizations. Firearm hospitalizations for years 1980 through 2004 and deaths for years 1980 through 1998, include all records with an ICD 9 code including E922 (.0-.3,.8,.9), E955(.0-.4), E965(.0-.4), E979.4, E985(.0-.4), or E970. Deaths for 1999 through 2004 include those with an ICD 10 code of W32-W34, X72-X74, X93-X95, Y22-Y24, or Y35.0.

Washington State Goal Statement:

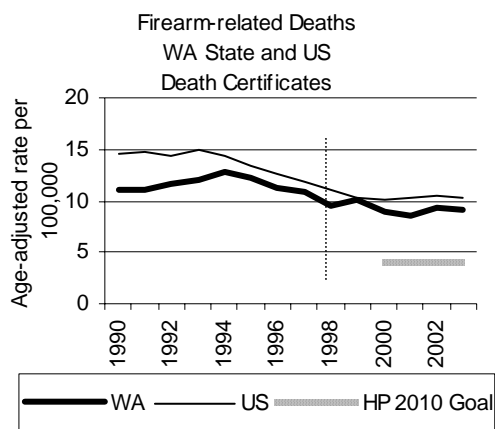
- Reduce firearm-related deaths by 7% from 9.2 per 100,000 in 2004 (567deaths) to 8.6 per 100,000 by 2010.

National Healthy People 2010 Goals:

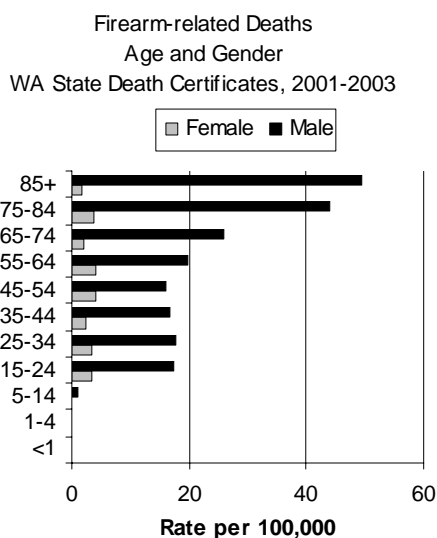
- Reduce firearm-related death rate from 11.3 per 100,000 in 1998 to no more than 4.1 per 100,000.
- Reduce the proportion of persons living in homes with firearms that are loaded and unlocked to no more than 16 percent (data from National Health Interview Survey). *In Washington in 2004, about 4% adults live in households with a loaded and unlocked firearm (data from BRFSS; national BRFSS data suggest about 4% of adults live in households with a loaded and unlocked firearm).*
- Reduce nonfatal hospitalizations caused by firearms to no more than 8.6 nonfatal hospitalizations per 100,000. *In 2004, the rate of nonfatal hospitalizations caused by firearms in Washington was 5.1 per 100,000.*

Statement of the Problem:

Firearms are a significant cause of injury death in Washington State. About half (51%) of suicides and 56% of homicides in Washington are committed with firearms. Washington State's firearm death rate has declined from 11.1 per 100,000 in 1990 to 9.2 per 100,000 in 2004 and has historically been slightly lower than the national rate. It is however, significantly higher than the Healthy People 2010 goal of 4.1 per 100,000.



From 2001-2003, Washington males are about six times more likely to die due to a firearm-related injury compared to females.



From 2000-2003, the age group at the highest risk of firearm-related death was those over the age of 65; the majority of deaths in this age group were suicides. American Indians and Alaska Natives and blacks have higher firearm-related death rates compared to other race groups, and non-Hispanics compared to Hispanics.

In 2004, about 34% of households in Washington had at least one firearm, about 7% of households had a loaded firearm, and about 4% had a loaded and unlocked firearm. In households with children under 18 years old, about 32% had at least one firearm (about 590,000 children), about 6% had a loaded firearm (about 105,000 children), and about 2% had a loaded and unlocked firearm (about 39,000 children).

Recommended Strategies from the Injury Community Planning Group:

- 1. Enhance public education about safe storage of firearms**

Keeping firearms stored unloaded, locked or separate from ammunition are associated with significant reductions in the risk of unintentional injuries and suicides among children and youth. Medical organizations and public health agencies all support safe storage practices in homes with children and youth.

Public awareness campaigns, such as the Lok-IT-UP campaign, that raise awareness about the importance of safe storage of firearms should be supported. The two main audiences of the campaign are parents and health care providers, so that they are knowledgeable enough about firearm safety to discuss the issue with their patients.

2. Community coalitions to reduce access of firearms

Community coalitions should bring together representatives from law enforcement, public health, child protective services, parent groups, firearm owners, and others to develop, implement and monitor a local plan to reduce access to guns and provide temporary safe storage when temporary removal of the firearm from the home is necessary (such as when there is an individual in the home exhibiting warning signs of suicide).

3. Increase safety standards on purchased firearms

Require that guns be sold with a child-safety lock or a personalized lock to prevent unauthorized use. Also require that handguns have loaded-chamber indicators or magazine safety disconnects that could prevent unintentional shootings. Currently most firearms sold through licensed dealers come with a free trigger or cable lock which is not the preferred method of safe storage.

4. Close the gun show loophole

Under current law, large numbers of firearms at gun shows are sold anonymously by non-licensed dealers, who make up more than one-quarter of the sellers at gun shows. Non-licensed dealers are not required to conduct criminal or mental health background checks of purchasers at gun shows and there are no restrictions on the number or types of firearms that collectors may sell at gun shows.

Since 1994 the Brady Act, which requires criminal and mental health background checks of firearm purchasers, has prevented more than 600,000 individuals from purchasing firearms. While the Brady Act requires licensed dealers to perform background checks, a dangerous loophole still exists, enabling unlicensed or private dealers to sell firearms at a gun show with no check required.

5. Support child access prevention laws

These are designed to limit children's access to and use of firearms in the home. The laws require firearm owners to store their firearms locked, unloaded or both, and make the firearm owners liable when children use a household firearm to threaten or harm themselves or others. Washington does not currently have a law regarding this. States that have passed CAP laws have seen improvements in reduction of child related deaths and injuries. These laws would be considered a best practice.

6. Participate in national efforts to improve firearm surveillance

More data on firearm injuries are needed to develop effective interventions to prevent and reduce firearm injuries. The data collected should include geographic, sociodemographic, and product specific information on key causal sequence factors such as alcohol and drug use, perpetrator-victim relationship, and any crime involvement.

Resources:

Washington State

1. Washington CeaseFire is a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to reducing gun violence in Washington State through education and legislative action.
<http://www.washingtonceasefire.org/>
2. LOK-IT-UP: A campaign to promote the Safe Storage of Firearms. Posters and brochures available at: <http://depts.washington.edu/lokitup/>
3. Washington State Childhood Injury Report
http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/injury/pubs/childhood_injury_report.htm

National

4. American College of Physician's Firearm Injury Prevention Resource Center
<http://www.acponline.org/firearms/index.html>
5. ASK (Asking Saves Kids) Campaign
<http://www.paxusa.org/ask/index.html>
6. Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence
<http://www.bradycenter.org/index.php>
7. Institute of Medicine. Reducing the Burden of Injury, Advancing Prevention and Treatment. National Academy Press: Washington, 1999, pgs 124-137.

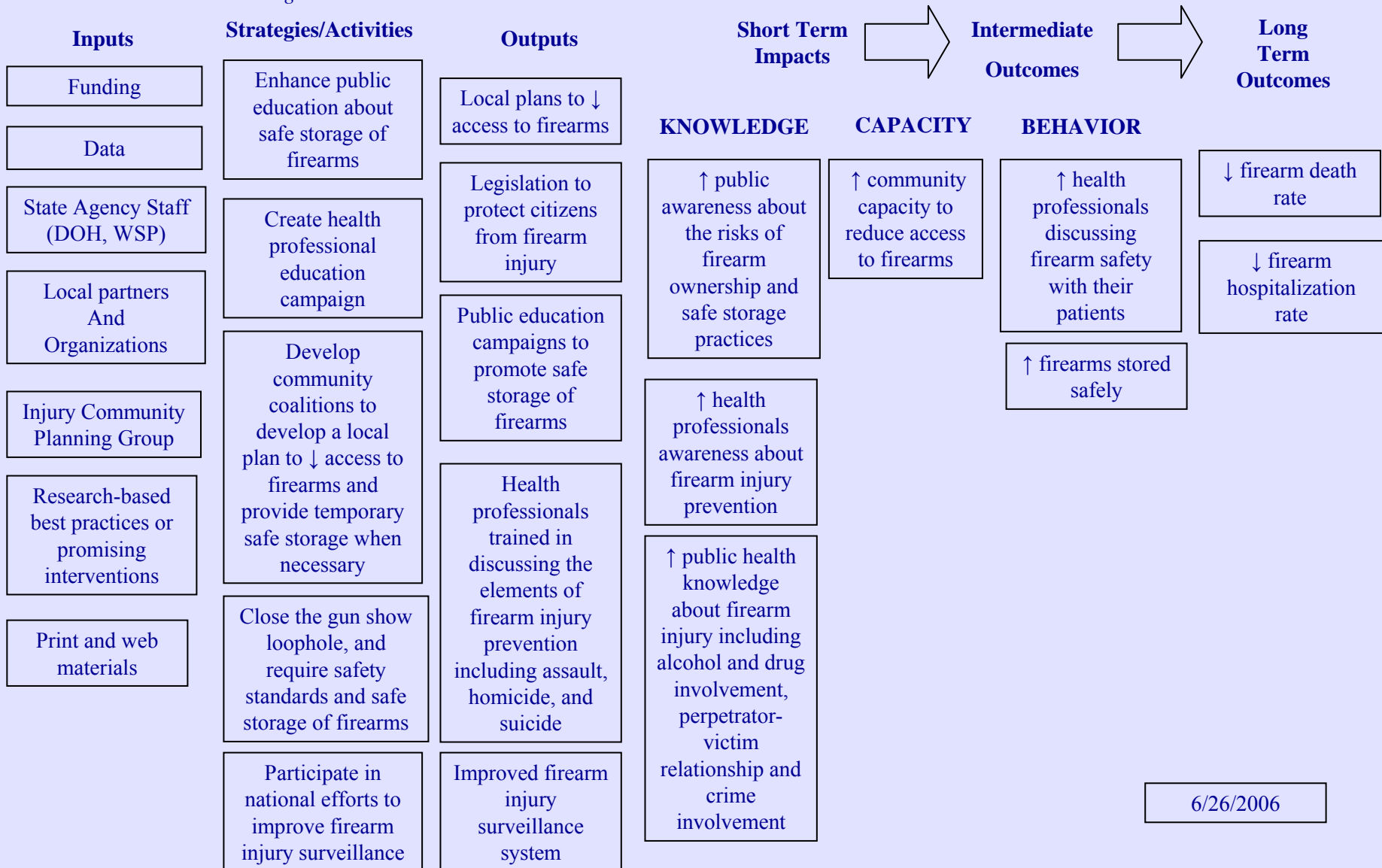
Reducing Firearm-related Injury in Washington State

Because we have these resources...

...we are able to implement these strategies/activities

...and create these resources...

...so that we achieve these outcomes for our citizens.



6/26/2006